

John N. Vickery. The Chinese Exclusion Laws: A Selective Annotated Bibliography of Federal Public Documents. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S degree. April, 2005. 25 pages. Advisor: Michael Van Fossen

This annotated bibliography contains selected United States Federal public documents relating to the Chinese Exclusion laws. These laws which prohibited the immigration of Chinese into the United States were in force from 1882 until 1943. The initial exclusion law was the first immigration legislation to restrict a group based solely on race and significantly contributed to the racially based immigration policy of the United States in the twentieth century. Composed primarily of legislation, treaties, committee reports and documents from the House and Senate, this bibliography is intended to aid the research of this important period of United States immigration policy.

Headings:

Government publications -- Bibliography

Chinese Exclusion Laws

Immigration and emigration -- Bibliography

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THE CHINESE EXCLUSION LAWS: A SELECTIVE ANNOTATED
BIBLIOGRAPHY OF FEDERAL PUBLIC DOCUMENTS

By
John N. Vickery

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Approved by:

Michael Van Fossen

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Introduction

The Chinese Exclusion era lasting from 1882 to 1943 marks an important and regretful period of United States Immigration policy. The initial exclusion law was the first immigration legislation to restrict a group based solely on race. The era is also considered the foundation of the racially based immigration policy of the twentieth century (Lee, 2002a). As significant scholarship has been done on the anti-Chinese attitudes that led to the Exclusion Era and to the legal doctrines that the Exclusion laws set in motion, this annotated bibliography can serve a tool for further research. United States immigration policy began to change in the late 1800's. Prior to the Civil War, immigration into the country was quite open and liberal. In 1868, Congress affirmed one's right to seek a new home in the United States (Henkin, 1987). Into the 1870's with immigration on the rise, a nationwide depression and increasing nativism, Congress began to investigate restricting and regulating immigration. While Chinese immigration was the primary target of Congressional and public anxiety, immigration policy in general shifted towards one of greater regulation and restriction. The general Immigration Act of August 3, 1882 (22 Statutes-at-Large 214) was one of the first steps in this direction. The law restricted what Congress referred to as undesirables and those immigrants believed to be at risk of becoming wards of the state (Kurian & Harahan, 1998).

Specifically, though, Congress and the public viewed Chinese immigration as a threat to American society. Animus towards Chinese labor had been growing since the end of the Civil War particularly in the western territories and California. In 1879, a bill to restrict Chinese immigration was vetoed by President Rutherford B. Hayes. The primary justification Hayes offered for vetoing the bill was that it conflicted with several articles in the Burlingame Treaty of 1868. This treaty would serve in many ways as the legal precedent for not instituting exclusion laws earlier despite much Congressional and public support. The desire for exclusion is reflected in Senator James G. Blaine speech of February 14, 1879 in which he states “either the Anglo-Saxon race will possess the Pacific slope or the Mongolians will possess it” (Gyory, 1998). However, by spring of 1882 and with President Chester Arthur in office, Congress had enough support to pass and have signed into law the “Chinese Exclusion” act. This act which prohibited entry of Chinese laborers into the United States was successively extended and maintained in force in various forms until 1943.

The passage of the 1882 legislation to restrict and its subsequent many versions added to the growing bureaucracy of the Immigration Service. At the time of the 1882 law’s passage, Immigration was regulated by the Department of the Treasury. Much of the early executive documents relating to the exclusion of the Chinese are letters from the Treasury addressing the need for appropriations to enforce the legislation. During much of the exclusion era, special Chinese Inspectors and interpreters were employed to issue certificates of residence to qualified immigrants and initiate the deportation of Chinese laborers who were universally excluded after the passage of the act. In 1904 the Immigration Service was moved to the new Department of Commerce and Labor.

Restriction of immigration inevitably led to immigrants seeking to enter the country by illegal means. According to documents from enforcement agencies, one of the most common methods Chinese immigrants attempted to avoid deportation was to claim that one had actually been born in the United States legally and then taken to China at a young age only to return years later. Efforts to combat this fraud led to regulations requiring Chinese immigrants to have supporting testimony of two non-Chinese persons and a notarized affidavit to verify their citizenship. As the vast majority of immigration during the period was through the nation's sea ports, enforcement was centered at these points. Documents from the exclusion era also point to the fear that Chinese immigrants who were refused entry at sea ports transferred their destination to Canada and Mexico in order to cross illegally by land. A 1903 Treasury Department document stridently refers to the less guarded land borders as "undoubtedly...the next point of attack." In order to prevent this, one document proposed an amendment to the exclusion law in force requiring steamship companies to return illegal immigrants directly to China.

Chinese immigrants also petitioned the courts to enter the country legally during the exclusion era. Lucy Salyer writes that between the passage of the initial 1882 law and 1890, Chinese immigrants filed 7,080 petitions in the San Francisco federal courts to challenge their denial of entry. Interestingly, she found that the courts looked favorably on the claims and approximately 85 to 90 percent were granted (Salyer, 1989). In view of the documents included in this bibliography, this can be viewed as one of the few areas where Chinese immigrants were looked upon favorably by agents of the United States government.

Much of the impetus to restrict the entry of Chinese laborers into the United States came from California. As the numbers of Chinese immigrants grew, conflict over the availability of jobs and the suppression of wages increased as well. Prior to the enactment of the first exclusion law and during the time of the successive laws, Congress sent special committees to the Pacific states to investigate the issue of Chinese immigration. The reports of these committees are detailed and provide interesting context to the legislation. While the Pacific region was a locus of anti-Chinese sentiment, it was a national movement. Stuart Miller traces the attitudes towards Chinese immigration and concludes that the national attitude beginning early in the nineteenth century was one of the Chinese as morally corrupt, servile and a menace to American progress (Miller, 1969).

The intensity of anti-Chinese sentiment in the territories is often expressed in territorial Governor's reports from the period preceding and after the enactment of the exclusion laws. An 1887 report from the Governor of the territory of Washington claimed that the "the antagonisms between the Americans and the Chinese are inherent and incurable." On multiple occasions, anti-Chinese sentiment resulted in violence. In 1885 and again in 1886 anti-Chinese riots broke out in Seattle. A letter from the Secretary of the Treasury estimates that it cost the territorial government \$4,168.77 to quell the riots. On September 2, 1885 coal miners in Rock Springs, Wyoming attacked Chinese laborers for not participating in a planned strike. The attack left twenty eight Chinese dead.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Exclusion Era was in full force. The 1892 Geary Act was made permanent in 1902 legislation that also extended the exclusion policy to United States island territories. Federal documents from the time

period point to the Philippines as the territory which most concerned lawmakers and immigration agents regarding Chinese immigrants. Erika Lee has argued that the establishment of exclusion as status quo provided the groundwork and bureaucratic structure to exclude other groups deemed undesirable as well as how to control foreigners immigrating to and residing in the United States. She writes that precursors to modern control structures such as the “United States Immigration and Naturalization Service, United States passports, “green cards,” illegal immigration and deportation policies can all be traced back to the Chinese Exclusion Act itself” (Lee, 2002a). The twentieth century “gate keeping” model of immigration policy, as Lee refers to it, can be said to have begun with the Chinese Exclusion laws.

The Exclusion Era came to an end on December 17, 1943, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed into law an act to repeal the Chinese Exclusion laws of the previous decades. As China was an ally in World War II, it had become increasingly difficult to maintain a restrictive immigration policy. Leong writes that throughout the Congressional debate on repeal in 1943, relations with China worsened as promises of war support were not fulfilled (Leong, 2003). Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion laws was instrumental in strengthening diplomatic ties with China. Leong also reports that public opposition to Chinese immigration had subsided by the 1940’s. A national public opinion poll commissioned by the Roosevelt administration and conducted by the Office of Public Opinion Research found 65% of 1200 in favor of repeal (Leong, 2003).

The types of items found for inclusion in this bibliography consist primarily of legislation, committee reports and documents from the House and Senate. The majority of these sources dated from the late 1800’s and the early 1900’s are found in the United

States Statutes at Large and Congressional Serial Set. Other sources include treaties that the United States signed with China in the 1800's as well as hearings held by Committee on Immigration and Naturalization. Finally, websites such as American Memory at the Library of Congress and the National Archives and Records Administration have historical overviews of the exclusion era as well as digitized primary sources. All of the above sources proved valuable in developing an understanding of the exclusion era.

Methodology

Originally I intended to look at the broader topic of United States immigration policy. When I began the project, though, I became interested in the particular period of immigration policy which resulted in the exclusion of Chinese laborers for sixty-one years. My first strategy was to search for a history of the Immigration and Naturalization Service which is now the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, a bureau of the Department of Homeland Security. I accomplished this through simple searches on Google Unclesam. After reading through various articles and monographs, I sought out the sources relating to Chinese exclusion that were referenced and continued following the trail. This began with the United States Statutes at Large and continued to the Serial Set and committee hearings. Knowing the rough dates of the era helped narrow the search and locate the sources more easily.

The indexes that I found most useful for locating sources were LexisNexis Congressional as well as print indexes to the United States Treaty Series, and the Statutes at Large. When using any of the indexes, I used the search terms *immigration*, *Chinese*, *China and exclusion*, *Chinese exclusion laws*. LexisNexis Congressional Historical Full Text was particularly quick and useful to access documents that were collected in the Serial Set. Poore's *A Descriptive Catalog of the Government Publications of the United States* was also helpful in locating documents. For locating executive branch documents, the *CIS Index to U.S. Executive Branch Documents* was useful. The executive branch

documents that I located in the *CIS* Index and included in this bibliography were also published in the *Serial Set* as House or Senate Documents. Finally, in addition to searching indexes, I browsed the Government Documents stacks under the SuDoc numbers for the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization.

While there are many documents relating to the exclusion era, it does not seem inconceivable that a comprehensive bibliography of government documents could be compiled. I tried to include sources that would track the exclusion era throughout its duration. What are perhaps lacking are additional published and unpublished Hearings. Also, a thorough examination of the *Congressional Record* from the Exclusion Era would also add significantly to this bibliography. Finally, I would have liked to expand the bibliography to include documents from State governments as well. Documents from the California legislature in particular would add context to the time period preceding the passage of the first federal Chinese Exclusion law in 1882.

Bibliography of United States Federal Public Documents

Legislation

“An act to execute certain treaty stipulations relating to Chinese”

Forty Seventh Congress Sess. I Chap 126

May 6th 1882

United States Statutes at Large

This act introduced the period of exclusion of Chinese laborer immigration to the United States. The act excludes officers of the Chinese government from exclusion. While, Chinese laborers who were already in the United States were eligible to remain, those arriving after implementation would be required to leave on the vessel that brought them to the United States.

“An act to regulate immigration”

Forty Seventh Congress Sess. I Chap 376

August 3, 1882

United States Statutes at Large vol. 22

This act while not specifically directed at Chinese immigration is important in that it marks a general shift in the immigration policy of the United States towards the restrictive. The act restricted immigrants deemed a “convict, lunatic, idiot, or any person unable to take care of himself or herself without becoming a public charge.” The act also designated the Secretary of the Treasury as the enforcer of the act. The Treasury would remain the enforcer of immigration until 1904 with the creation of the Department of Commerce and Labor under which the Immigration Service was transferred.

Our Documents – Chinese Exclusion Act (1882)

<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=47>

Date visited: 4/4/05

Users of this site can view and download a digitized image of the original, handwritten “Chinese Exclusion” act. Also on the site is an overview essay of the various acts that were passed by Congress to exclude Chinese laborers from entering the United States.

“An act in amendment to the various acts relative to immigration and the importation of aliens under contract or agreement to perform labor”

Fifty First Congress Sess. I Chap 551

March 3, 1891

United States Statutes at Large vol. 26

This general immigration act does not specifically relate to Chinese immigration as Chinese labor had already been restricted. The act is significant, however, in that it includes provisions to prevent the promise of contract work upon arrival in the United States. The act is also significant in that it created the office of Superintendent of Immigration further adding to the growing bureaucratic structure regulating immigration. Other important provisions of the act include the establishment of medical examinations of immigrants as well as the immediate return of unlawful immigrants.

“An Act to Prohibit the Coming of Chinese Persons into the United States”

Fifty Second Congress Sess. I Chap 60

May 5th 1892

Statutes at Large

This act known as the Geary Act extended the original Chinese Exclusion act of 1882 for an additional ten years. The act also called for legal Chinese laborer residents to register for a certificate of residence within one year of the passage of the act. This act was made permanent in 1902.

“An Act to prohibit the coming into and to regulate the residence within the United States, its Territories, and all territory under its jurisdiction, and the District of Columbia, of Chinese and persons of Chinese descent.”

Fifty Seventh Congress Sess. I

April 29, 1902

United States Statutes at Large vol. 32

This act extended the existing Chinese exclusion act as long as it was not inconsistent with other laws or treaties. Importantly, this act also extended the exclusion of Chinese island territories of the United States. Furthermore, the act included the requirement that Chinese laborers in the United States obtain within one year of passage of the act a certificate of residence. Failure to do so would result in deportation. In order to enforce this requirement, the act authorizes the Secretary of the Treasury to amend existing rules and regulations.

“An act to repeal the Chinese Exclusion Acts, to establish quotas, and for other purposes.”

Seventy Eighth Congress Sess. I Chap 344

December 17, 1943

United States Statutes at Large

This act officially repealed the various Chinese Exclusion Acts of the previous half century and more. The actual text of the act is little more than references to the previous acts and statements of repeal.

Treaties and Conventions

“Treaty of Trade, Consuls and Emigration between China and the United States, signed at Washington, 28 July, 1868.”

July 28, 1868

United States Statutes at Large vol. 16

This treaty, known as the Burlingame Treaty and named after Anson Burlingame a minister to China who was asked to head a diplomatic mission to the United States and Europe, was a revision of the 1858 Treaty of Tientsin. In contrast to the later treaties and attitudes toward Chinese immigration, the Burlingame Treaty tacitly encouraged emigration to the United States by asserting “the inherent and inalienable right of man to change his home and allegiance, and also the mutual advantage of the free migration and emigration of their citizens and subjects, respectively for purposes of curiosity, of trade, or as permanent residents.” Furthermore, the treaty stipulated that “Chinese subjects visiting or residing in the United States, shall enjoy the same privileges, immunities, and exemptions in respect to travel or residence, as may there be enjoyed by the citizens or subjects of the most favored nation.” Public and Congressional pressure against Chinese immigration resulted in the treaty being renegotiated in 1880 to restrict Chinese immigration and then fully reversed in 1882 by the Chinese Exclusion Act.

“Treaty between the United States and China, concerning immigration. Concluded November 17, 1880.”

November 17, 1880

United States Statutes at Large vol. 22

This treaty negotiated and signed in Peking in 1880 set the stage for the Chinese exclusion act of 1882. In the treaty, it is agreed to that the United States may restrict the immigration of Chinese laborers. Other classes of Chinese immigrants were to be excluded, however. According to the treaty, legislation that the United States might put in place to enforce its agreements would not subject immigrants to “personal maltreatment of abuse.” Interestingly, in the preamble, the United States refers to the need for the treaty due to the “increasing immigration of Chinese laborers” and the “embarrassment consequent upon such immigration.”

“Convention between the United States of America and the Empire of China. Emigration between the two countries. Signed at Washington March 17, 1894.”

March 17, 1894

United States Statutes at Large vol. 28

This convention signed in Washington by President Grover Cleveland essentially extended the above treaty for an additional ten years from the date of its signing. The convention references the 1892 act of Congress that extended the “Chinese Exclusion” law of 1882. The convention absolutely forbids the immigration of Chinese laborers to the United States in “view of the antagonism and much deprecated and serious disorders” that their presence was causing.

Committee Reports

“Report of the Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration”

S.r.p.689 47-2, 1265pp.

February 27, 1877

From the Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration

Serial Set vol. 1734

This massive report is the earliest Committee report that I found relating to Chinese immigration. It predates the first “Chinese Exclusion Law” by five years. The Joint Special Committee consisted of three Senators and three House Representatives who were charged with traveling to the Pacific coast to study the “[c]haracter, extent, and effect of Chinese immigration.” The report begins by explaining that large numbers of Chinese laborers were willing to work for “starvation” wages forcing whites out of work and creating a great deal of hostility towards the Chinese.

“Chinese Immigration”

H.r.p. 4048 51-2, 598pp.

From the Select Committee on Immigration and Naturalization.

March 2, 1891

Serial Set vol. 2890

This nearly six hundred page report including testimony was a result of a concurrent resolution of March 12, 1890 to send a subcommittee to the Pacific states to further study the Chinese immigration issue and suggest possible legislation. The report states that the number of Chinese in the United States is decreasing “although not as rapidly as in the opinion of your subcommittee is desirable” (p.1).

“Regulation of the Coming of Chinese into the United States”

H.rp 2503 56-2, 3pp.

From the Committee on Foreign Affairs

January 25, 1901

Serial Set vol. 4213

This report was submitted by the Committee on Foreign Affairs. It offers explanations regarding certain sections of H.R 13197. The primary focus of the report was to point out to the House that even with the exclusion laws in place, there was an extensive clandestine Chinese immigration network.

“Retirement benefits for Chinese, Japanese, and Hindu interpreters in the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service who are Citizens of the United States”

H.rp.2353, 76-3, 3pp.

From the Committee on the Civil Service

Session Date: 1940, 1941

Serial Set vol. 10442

This brief report by the Committee on the Civil Service comes just two years before the repeal of the Exclusion Laws. The report seeks to encourage Congress to amend the Civil Service Retirement Act to extend benefits to Chinese, Japanese, and Hindu interpreters. Included in the report are two letters testifying to the loyalty of and service provided by these interpreters over the years.

Hearings

“Argument of Joseph C. G. Kennedy adverse to the bills (409 and 477) "To restrict the immigration of the Chinese to the United States," and "To regulate Chinese immigration," introduced December 10, 1877, and January 10, 1878 -- Read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.”

Senate Foreign Affairs Committee

February 20, 1878

Senate Misc Doc. 36, 45-2, 36pp.

Serial Set vol. 1786

SUDOC: Y 4.F 76/2:C 44

In this 36 page argument before the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, Senator Joseph C. G. Kennedy objects to the 1877 and 1878 bills to restrict Chinese immigration to the United States. Both of these bills were subsequently vetoed by presidents Cleveland and Hayes. Senator Kennedy objects to the passage of the bills based on his interpretation of the Burlingame Treaty which recognized the “inherent and inalienable right of man to change his home and allegiance.” Kennedy’s argument also includes press reports and

other sources to support his claim that Chinese immigration is not harmful to the United States.

“Wives of American Citizens of Oriental Race”

Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization House of Representatives

House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization

Seventieth Congress First Session on H.R. 6974

February 7, 1928

Hearing No. 70.1.3, 26pp.

SUDOC: Y4.Im6/1:W79/3

These hearings were in regard to H.R. 6974 to permit “as non-quota immigrants certain alien wives and children of United States citizens.” The hearings present testimony and affidavits from several native-born Chinese Americans regarding the immigration of their wives and children to the United States.

“Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts”

Hearings before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, 283 pp.

May 19, 20, 26, 27, June 2, 3, 1943

Session-Date: 1943

SUDOC: Y4.Im6/1:C44/6

These hearings were held regarding two House bills to repeal the Chinese Exclusion Acts. The several days of hearings include testimonies of the many contributions that Chinese immigrants made to the development of the American West. Other statements speak to the fact that China was at the time an important ally in World War II.

Executive Documents

“Veto of the Chinese Immigration Law. Message from the President of the United States to the House of Representatives”

House Ex. Doc. No. 102, 45-3, 7pp.

March 1, 1879

Serial Set vol. 1858

In this message to the House of Representatives, Rutherford B. Hayes vetoes H.R. 2423, one of the early acts to restrict Chinese immigration. Hayes’ motivation for vetoing the act centers on the 1869 Burlingame Treaty which addressed issues of Chinese immigration and Chinese already in the United States. Hayes disagreed with the sections of the act which would have abrogated two articles of the Burlingame Treaty.

“Message from the President of the United States Transmitting a Report of the Secretary of State”

Senate Ex. Doc. 175, 47-1, 21 pp.

May 15, 1882

Serial Set vol. 1991

This document is a compilation of correspondence relating to Chinese immigration between the Department of State and George F. Seward who was Minister to China. Twelve letters are included in the document beginning in 1878 to 1880. Also included with the correspondence are letters that Seward sent to various Chinese officials.

“Message from the President of the United States Transmitting the Last Annual Report of the Government Directors of the Union Pacific Railway Company”

Senate Ex. Doc 73, 49-1, 9pp.

February 15, 1886

Serial Set vol. 2336

This document is of interest to the issue of Chinese immigration in that it mentions the September 2, 1885 massacre of Chinese in Rock Springs, Wyoming. In the document, it is noted that any efforts to bring those responsible for the massacre to justice have “proved fruitless” (p. 1).

“The Chinese question. Message from the President of the United States relative to Chinese treaty stipulation.”

House Ex. Doc. 102, 49-1, 71pp.

March 2, 1886

Serial Set vol. 2398

This 71 page document submitted by President Grover Cleveland to the Committee on Foreign Affairs offers detailed information surrounding the anti-Chinese riot in Rock Springs in Wyoming Territory on September 2, 1885. The message has numerous enclosures including press reports of the riot, detailed accountings of damages to Chinese laborers as well as casualty reports by local doctors. With regards to United States relations with China, the two most important aspects of the document are letters between the Chinese Legation and the United States Secretary of State, T. F. Bayard.

“Report of the Governor of Idaho.”

House Ex. Doc. 1/27, 49-2, 20pp.

October 1, 1886

Serial Set vol. 2468

SUDOC: I1.1:886/v.2; I1.19:886

This report from the Idaho Territory includes an entire section titled “Chinese and Labor.” In it, the Governor calls the immigration of Chinese “The gravest and most momentous question that the people of the Pacific Slope have to grapple with.” In the document, the Governor implores the Congress to take action by abrogating the Burlingame Treaty and prohibit the entry of all Chinese into the United States in all cases. The strident tone of the letter is exemplified by phrases such as “we demand the total exclusion of the Chinese” and “the Chinaman is directly antagonistic to the white race.” The Governor also points to the importation of Chinese contract labor as a specific menace to the people and links such labor to “communistic elements from abroad.”

“Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, transmitting communication from the Governor of Washington Territory relative to the amount expended during the anti-Chinese troubles in Seattle.”

Senate Ex. Doc. 85, 49-2, 5pp.

February 16, 1887

Serial Set vol. 2448

This document by the Secretary of the Interior conveys communication from the Governor of Washington Territory relating to the cost of quelling the anti-Chinese riots of November 1885 and February 1886. The total cost according to the document amounts to \$4,168.77 and according to the Secretary should be repaid the Territory. Most interesting in the document are transcripts of telegrams instructing the Governor to quell the violence as well as tables listing the firearms purchased in order to do so.

“Report of the Governor of Washington Territory.”

House Ex. Doc. 1/21, 50-1, 82pp.

October 15, 1887

Serial Set vol. 2541

SUDOC: I1.1:887/v.1; I1.35:887

This report from the Governor of the Territory of Washington is similar to the 1886 report from the Governor of Idaho Territory in its description of Chinese immigrants as a menace to the Pacific coast. Possibly most important historically is that this report was submitted after a significant anti-Chinese riot in Seattle of February 1886. In his report, the Governor claims that “the antagonisms between the Americans and the Chinese are inherent and incurable.” He alludes to the Seattle riot yet claims that the greater degree of anti-Chinese violence is perpetrated by Chinese themselves.

“Appropriation for Enforcement of Chinese Exclusion Acts: Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury.”

House Ex. Doc. 244, 52-1, 3pp.

May 27, 1892

Serial Set vol. 2957

This letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, Charles Foster, was submitted in response to the passage of the Geary Act of 1892. The main point of Foster's letter is to indicate to Congress that additional funds must be appropriated in order to enforce the law. Foster includes estimates as the cost of enforcement and concludes that a total of \$160,000 should be allocated. Foster includes in his letter, a letter from the Commissioner of Internal Revenue stating cost estimates for registering Chinese laborers in accordance with the Geary Act.

Senate Documents

“Letter of Hon. J. S. Hagar, Giving Statistics of Number of Arrivals and Departures of Chinese at the Port of San Francisco.”

Senate Misc. Doc. 90, 50-1, 2pp.

February 23, 1888

Serial Set vol. 2516

This letter from the San Francisco Custom House Collector is in response to NV Republican Senator William Morris Stewart's request for the numbers of arrivals and departures of Chinese from the port of San Francisco since the November 17, 1880 treaty with China. Included are numbers for the time periods 1852 to November 17, 1880; November 17, 1880 to August 5, 1882; and August 5, 1882 to December 31, 1887. The author stresses that these numbers do not include clandestine entry into the United States from Mexico or Canada.

“Concurrent Resolution on the Prevention of Entry of Chinese into the United States”

Senate Misc. Doc. 141, 51-1, 1pp.

April 30, 1890

Serial Set vol. 2698

This single paragraph document was reported by a member of the Committee on Foreign Relations. In the document, the President is urged by the Senate and the House of Representatives to enter into treaty negotiations with both Mexico and Great Britain in order to prevent Chinese laborers from entering the United States from Mexico and Canada.

“Memorial from Rev. Gilbert Reid, formerly missionary to China, protesting against legislation of May 5, 1892, known as Geary law.”

Senate Misc. Doc. 94, 53-1, 2pp.

November 1, 1893

Serial Set vol. 3145

This document is one of the few letters of protest to the Geary Act of 1892 that have been included in the Serial Set. The lack of others points to the widespread support within the country for the exclusion of Chinese to the United States. The document's author, the Rev. Gilbert Reid, was a missionary to China for over ten years and who, according to the letter, was the "recipient of favors from that country." In total, the protest to the Geary Act is mild as the author claims that modifications to the law could make it conform to past treaties and would at that point be an acceptable piece of legislation. The letter was submitted to the Senate by George Frisbie Hoar, Republican Senator from MA.

"Some Reasons for Chinese Exclusions. Meat vs. Rice. American Manhood against Asiatic Coolieism. Which Shall Survive?"

Senate Doc. 137, 57-1, 32pp.

November 22, 1901

Serial Set vol. 4231

This document was written by the American Federation of Labor in an effort to persuade Congress to either reenact the Chinese Exclusion Law in force or to draft new legislation upon its expiration. The main premise of the document is to point out that that Chinese immigration, particularly in California, is resulting in the displacement of white laborers. While the title and many quotes by supporters of exclusion included in the document reflect the racially based motivation, the authors claim "[n]ot one scintilla of prejudice." Perhaps most useful within the document are information regarding the system of Chinese indentured servitude as well as various labor and commerce statistics. The document also has an illustration comparing native U.S. labor to Gulliver tied down by Lilliputian Chinese immigrants.

"Immigration of Chinese into the United States."

Senate Doc. 106, 57-1, 41pp.

January 15, 1902

Serial Set vol. 4230

This pamphlet referred to the Senate Committee on Immigration and authored by former Presidents Chester A. Arthur and Rutherford B. Hayes is a direct refutation of the pamphlet submitted to the Senate by the American Federation of Labor the previous year. It was submitted to dissuade Congress from passing the 1902 Act which made the Geary Act permanent. This document pointedly disagrees with specifics of the AFL pamphlet referring to their page number. The authors claim that contrary to the belief of exclusion supporters, Chinese immigration has a positive effect on the economy. It is important to note that President Hayes vetoed an early bill to exclude Chinese from the United States in 1879.

“A compilation of the laws, treaty, and regulations and rulings of the Treasury Department relating to the exclusion of Chinese.”

Senate Doc. 291, 57-1, 54pp.

April 8, 1902

Serial Set vol. 4239

As the title of this document states, it is a compilation of items ranging from 1882 to 1900. With the inclusion of the text of the Convention of December 8, 1894 as well as the major legislation from 1882 to 1900, this document can serve as a single point of reference for nearly twenty years of the Exclusion period. Possibly more importantly, the document includes ninety one regulations of the Bureau of Immigration of the Treasury Department. Listed regulations range from guidelines as to which classes of Chinese immigrants are allowed into the United States to brief opinions of the Attorney General relating to the enforcement of the Exclusion Laws.

House Documents

“Causes of General Depression in Labor and Business. Chinese Immigration. Investigation by a Select Committee of the House of Representatives”

House Misc. Doc. 5, 46-2, 468pp.

December 10, 1879

Serial Set vol. 1928

This document predating the Exclusion Laws by three years looks at the influx of Chinese immigrants to the Pacific states and the effect it has on labor. The document consists to a large degree of testimony taken by the seven member committee.

“Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, with recommendations in regard thereto, the draft of an act to amend the act excluding Chinese from this country.”

House Doc. 372, 54-1, 2pp.

April 30, 1896

Serial Set vol. 3428

This letter by the Secretary of the Treasury and referred to the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization recommends that the Chinese Exclusion Law in force from 1893 be amended to prevent fraudulent entry into the United States by Chinese who claim to have been born in the United States and then taken to China at a young age. The Secretary of the Treasury suggests in his amendment that people who offer false affidavits or testimony of United States citizenship be punished under perjury laws. The document's author claims that the rule requiring returning Chinese to have testimony by two non-Chinese is still open to fraud and additional enforcement measures are necessary.

“Amending Chinese exclusion laws. Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, with the draft of a bill, copy of a letter from the Commissioner-General of Immigration relating to amendment of the laws relating to deportation of Chinese.”

House Doc. 472, 56-2, 2pp.

February 15, 1901

Serial Set vol. 4163

This short document by the Secretary of the Treasury and referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs urges that the Chinese Exclusion Law of 1888 be amended to require steamship companies to return unlawful Chinese immigrants to China. Under the 1888 law, the Secretary of the Treasury states that Chinese laborers who are not allowed entry through United States ports travel on to Canadian or Mexican ports and then enter the country illegally by way of “unguarded points along our northern and southern boundary lines.”

“Letter from the Secretary of War, transmitting a copy of a communication from the Secretary of State inclosing protest of the Chinese Government against exclusion of the Chinese from the Philippines.”

House Doc. 562, 57-1, 3pp.

April 15, 1902

Serial Set vol. 4361

This document submitted by the Secretary of War, Elihu Root and referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs includes a letter of protest from the Prince of Ch'ing regarding the exclusion of Chinese from the Philippines. The letter states that while the Chinese were mistreated by the Spanish during their rule of the Philippines, they were not, however, forbidden to immigrate. Chinese immigration to United States controlled Philippines would be restricted after the passage of the April 29, 1902 Immigration law.

“Annual Report of the Commissioner-General of Immigration for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1903.”

House Doc. 758, 58-2, 147pp.

June 30, 1903

Serial Set vol. 4676

SUDOC: T21.1:903

This document represents the last annual report from the Immigration Bureau under the Treasury Department. Beginning in 1904 with the establishment of the Department of Commerce and Labor, the Immigration Service ceased to be the duties of the Treasury. More than twenty pages of this 147 page document are devoted exclusively to the Chinese Exclusion Laws. Of particular concern to the author is the apparent illegal entry of Chinese from Canada. Mexico, he claims “will undoubtedly be the next point of attack.” The author attributes one particular method of immigration fraud to the

“difficulty of distinguishing Chinese persons from one another.” This document also includes several charts and tables of immigration data specific to Chinese such as arrivals and departures of registered Chinese laborers and arrests of Chinese persons coming into the United States.

General Reference

INS History, Genealogy, and Education – Overview of INS History

<http://uscis.gov/graphics/aboutus/history/articles/oview.htm>

Date visited: 4/5/05

This page within the broader U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website [http://uscis.gov/graphics/index.htm] provides a general history of the INS. Specifically mentioned are the Chinese Exclusion acts as well as the system of “Chinese Inspectors” who were charged with enforcing those acts. The document also provides an overview of the Ellis Island station.

NARA – Facilities – Finding Aids to Archival Holdings

“Chinese Immigration and the Chinese in the United States”

http://www.archives.gov/facilities/finding_aids/chinese_immigration.html

Date visited: 4/5/05

This document is a detailed finding aid for NARA holdings related to Chinese immigration and Chinese in the United States. Useful are the citations to the various Chinese Exclusion laws and regulations that were in place from 1882 until 1943. Also useful is a section regarding various Federal agencies that were active in enforcement of the Exclusion laws.

The Chinese in California, 1850-1925 (American Memory, Library of Congress)

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award99/cubhtml/cichome.html>

Date visited: 4/5/05

Part of the American Memory project of the Library of Congress, this site offers a “compilation of selected holdings from collections housed in the archives and special collections of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; The Ethnic Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley; and the California Historical Society, San Francisco.” Holdings range from reports to photographs. A timeline and essays relating to Chinese immigrants in California are also available. One essay in particular deals specifically with anti-Chinese sentiment and the Chinese Exclusion laws.

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